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MANAGING INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Experiences with assistance in the reform of crime prevention
and criminal justice in Central and Eastern Europe**

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FOREWORD

Throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the process of transition to democratic societies and market economies has continued for a number of years. Many Governments, agencies, institutions and organizations have attempted to facilitate this process by providing expertise and assistance in the economic, commercial, environmental, social, political and legal fields.

The crime prevention and criminal justice sector has also received a considerable amount of attention. The growing HEUNI database on international projects in this field contains information on hundreds of projects that were planned or being carried out during 1995 alone.

In the process, and in its own activities, HEUNI has noted that a number of problems continue to vex the planning, implementation and evaluation of many of these projects. Despite the number of successful projects, there appears to be a strong undercurrent of frustration over the slowness of the process, over the difficulties in getting projects carried out, and especially over the lack of impact - a sense of frustration that is shared by donors and recipients alike, in connection with projects all across the region.

The recipients are aware that the assistance is largely being provided on a *pro bono* basis. The donors, in turn, are very much aware of the desire of the recipients to help in the process. This often leads to a situation where both sides are reluctant to broach sensitive issues, and an open discussion of the problems becomes difficult.

The problems encountered tend to be the same in project after project. For example, often no initial needs assessment is carried out, and as a result the project is of doubtful utility or has a low priority; alternatively, an extended needs assessment is carried out, but funds are unavailable for further activities; there may be a lack of coordination among different projects in the same field; or one or both of the partners may not be able to fulfil their commitments due, perhaps, to bureaucratic inertia or lack of political or financial support.

In order to assess the experiences of beneficiary and recipient countries, HEUNI organized an expert group meeting in Helsinki on 3-4 May 1996, on "Managing international criminal justice projects: How to overcome problems in international assistance". The meeting was attended by Mr Gueorgui Rouptchev (Bulgaria), Ms Kaija Gertnere (Latvia), Mr Gerard de Boer (the Netherlands), Mr Ulrik Åshuvud (Sweden), Ms Sally Brandel (the United States of America), Mr Vincent del Buono and Henrik Andersen (the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the United Nations), Mr Ugljesa Zvekic (the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute), Mr Hans-Jürgen Bartsch (the Council of Europe) and Mr Matti Joutsen and Ms Terhi Viljanen (HEUNI).

The HEUNI expert meeting was envisaged as part of an ongoing process of the improvement of international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice. Most directly, the discussions were designed to increase awareness of the problems encountered, and to improve utilization of the information that HEUNI is collecting in its database on international projects.

The present paper is a combination of the results of the expert meeting and the updated contents of an earlier (currently out-of-print) HEUNI paper entitled "International cooperation".

MANAGING INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE:

Experiences with assistance in the reform of crime prevention and criminal justice in Central and Eastern Europe

1. Introduction and summary of recommendations

The Central and Eastern European countries are currently simultaneously seeking to reform their criminal justice system in line with international standards, bring down the level of crime and meet public demands for safety and security. Although considerable progress has been made, the work continues to be so vast that the cooperation of other countries is needed in sharing their experience and in providing financial, technical and material support.

Many have been quick to respond. The range of donors includes individual governments and governmental agencies, intergovernmental organizations,¹ various international, national and local professional, human rights and scientific associations, other associations interested in assisting Central and Eastern Europe (including religious groups, ethnic-based groups, charity organizations and ideologically motivated groups), academic institutions, various consulting business, and even a large number of individuals who are providing assistance on their own.

It is in no way a reflection on the energy and

dedication of these donors, or of the recipients, that problems have emerged in the process. All large-scale reforms are complex and time-consuming, and problems are bound to arise. The international dimension adds its own difficulties: differences in culture, perceptions and language may lead to misunderstandings that at best only slow, but at worst can derail the assistance project.

After so many years of reform, and hundreds of assistance projects large and small, some of the more recurrent problems can be identified. In the following, these problems will be reviewed, and some suggestions will be made on strategies that have proven successful in circumventing the problems. Understandably enough, these notes are intended as generalizations. Depending on the issue involved, the type of assistance being provided and the operating environment, some comments are more applicable than others.

Each section begins with a recommendation. Some of these recommendations may appear self-evident, and others may appear excessively heavy-handed. Following these recommendations at the outset, however, can save time, energy and resources, and can increase the positive impact of the project.

- **Carry out a needs assessment.** Identify the problem, the factors contributing to the problem and the available resources.
- **Find out who else is working in the same area.** Review what projects have been or are being carried out, or are being planned in the same country and sector.
- **Decide on the purpose of the project.** Ideally, the project should also be placed within the context of the national strategy for develop-

¹ Intergovernmental organizations that are particularly active are the Council of Europe, for example within the framework of the Demosthenes and Themis programmes, the European Union, and the United Nations, working through the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division, the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and HEUNI. Other examples include the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

ment.

- **Consider different strategies for accomplishing the purpose.**
- **Prepare a written project proposal.** Specify the purpose of the project, its expected impact, how the project fits in with over-all plans for development, the timetable, and the responsibilities of each party.
- **Analyze the expected risks and benefits.**
- **Know your partner.** If necessary, identify back-up support.
- **Secure the support of all the relevant "stakeholders".**
- **Allocate responsibility for the costs.**
- **Familiarize yourself with the legal system and culture in the recipient country.**
- **Start small.**
- **Work according to a realistic timetable and cost estimates.**
- **Monitor progress in the project and evaluate its impact.**

One final recommendation that applies to much in life: **Be patient.** Systems cannot be changed overnight, and individual projects may have only an imperceptible impact. International cooperation provides immediate rewards in meeting new people and learning new things, but its effect on crime prevention and on the operation of criminal justice system can only be seen (if at all) in the long run.

2. The assessment of needs

2.1. Identification of priorities

Recommendation: All projects should be preceded by a needs

assessment that identifies the problem, the factors contributing to the problem, the available resources and suggestions for remedying the problem.

Perhaps the main problem in the reform of crime prevention and criminal justice - and in providing assistance - is in knowing where to begin. What is the priority in crime prevention and in the reform of the criminal justice system in any one country in Central or Eastern Europe?²

As such, the question is unanswerable. At the very least, it will be answered differently by different people. Everyone has their own agenda, and naturally to each their own immediate interests and needs are the most important. One respondent to HEUNI's 1992 survey of needs in international cooperation tried to answer the question by remaining on a high level of generality. He noted that he would appreciate "information and documentation on all kinds of issues concerning crime prevention, the administration of criminal justice and the treatment of offenders." A second respondent was even more succinct in noting that he would appreciate "all forms of cooperation." Ultimately, the priorities will presumably be set in an ad hoc manner, by different authorities on different levels. The general subject and type of assistance in each case will be determined largely by the capacity of those providing the assistance. The donors will not willingly go outside of their areas of expertise in an effort to meet what could objectively be termed a higher priority of the

² One question of priorities that must be bypassed here is the priority of crime prevention and criminal justice as a whole in the restructuring of societies in Central and Eastern Europe. The different countries must engage in a continuous balancing act between economic and market reform, constitutional reform, the development of civil and administrative law, the improvement of the infrastructure, the provision of basic social, health, housing and educational services, the protection of the environment, the development of local administration and external defence, and so on.

recipient.

Nonetheless, the cooperative project should be preceded by an assessment of the actual needs of the host country, an assessment which may lead to some reorientation in the project's design. All too often, projects implemented are based on a desire for a quick and attractive "fix." Such projects may lead to a superficial improvement in the situation. However, more fundamental improvements are possible only after an examination of the present situation and resources, as well as the actual needs.

2.2. Avoidance of unnecessary gaps and overlaps

Recommendation: In planning projects, a review should be made of what projects have been or are being carried out, or are being planned in the same country and sector.

Those engaged in cooperative projects are often not aware of what other people or agencies have been or are doing in the same country or in the same sector. As a result, certain agencies and institutions in Central and Eastern Europe receive considerable assistance, while other equally well-deserving agencies and institutions receive little or no attention.

Part of the reason for this is simply difficulties in the flow of information. So many agencies, organizations and individuals are involved in international cooperation projects that it is difficult to keep track of what others are doing. (In particular in the case of large federal States, there may even be insufficient coordination within the same donor Government.) Some donor countries or agencies may not even regard the activity of other potential donor countries as particularly relevant or interesting. In addition, some recipients have apparently been reluctant to publicize what assistance other agencies or countries are giving them, lest potential donors conclude that such recipients are already receiving sufficient assistance.³

³ Internationally, several agencies

Even those agencies and institutions that receive assistance from several sources have their own problems. One example is that the police authorities of one country have received, in short order, delegations from the police authorities of three Western countries, each of which was unaware of the activity of the others. The advice received regarding such issues as central control over the police, the use of discretion, the role of community police and so on was to a considerable extent conflicting.

In itself, there is nothing improper or wrong with repetition or overlap, since projects which work in the same direction tend to reinforce one another. However, the impact of the project could be improved if it is designed to build on the work that has already been carried out, in terms both of incremental development and of learning from past experience.

2.3. Identification of the purpose of the project

Recommendation: The specific purpose(s) of the project should be clarified and agreed upon by the parties. Ideally, the project should also be placed within the context of the national strategy for development.

There are many legitimate and important reasons for participating in cooperative projects. From the point of view of the beneficiary countries, of course, the experience of other countries in what works and does not work in crime prevention and control can serve as useful guidance. This is the underlying rationale of practically all international cooperation projects directed at Central and Eastern Europe.

Countries in Western Europe, in turn, have a

(such as the UNDCP, the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, and the EU) are trying to gather information on projects, which adds to frustration among those who must supply the information.

legitimate national interest in helping Central and Eastern European countries prevent and control crime in part to halt what is sometimes seen as a rising wave of crime which is spilling over national borders to threaten also Western European countries. (For similar reasons, Central and Eastern European countries have a strong reason for developing cooperation among themselves.)

It has also been argued that Western countries should support the stabilization of the situation in Central and Eastern Europe in order to avoid the danger that the crime issue is used by various political factions for their own ends, whether these ends be a return to the old regime, the installation of a xenophobic national government or the adoption of excessively punitive and repressive approaches in criminal justice.

There are also obvious humanitarian concerns underlying a great number of cooperative projects, such as protection of the rights of the victim, the suspect, the defendant and the prisoner.

Furthermore, cooperation should not be seen as one-sided assistance, with the West providing assistance to the East. In the process, criminal justice agencies and researchers in the West themselves have the opportunity to learn new and useful techniques and approaches.

Nonetheless, the parties involved in an international project may have different hidden agendas, which may arise from national interests or commercial interests. For example, a police agency may be interested in running training courses in another country not (only) in order to impart knowledge but (also) in order to develop professional contacts, which may prove valuable if criminal cases develop that involves the recipient country. Businesses, in turn, may be interested in promoting the use of their products.

Also projects with such hidden agendas may well prove valuable, in particular since the beneficiaries have their own vested interests in ensuring the success of the project. The

primary concern that the recipient country should have is that the officially acknowledged purpose of the project is achieved.

Furthermore, an attempt should be made to fit the project within the over-all strategy of the recipient country. Several Central and Eastern European countries, working in cooperation with international development agencies, have prepared national crime prevention programmes or national criminal justice strategies, which ideally also focus on building the capacity to plan, manage and evaluate projects.

2.4. Determination of the best way to accomplish the purpose

Recommendation: Various options should be considered when planning how best to deal with a problem. In many cases, the best results can be achieved by bundling different approaches, such as the exchange of information, training and technical assistance.

The purpose of the project can be accomplished in a number of ways. For example if the purpose is to improve the capacity of judges to ensure implementation of the accusatorial principle in line with international standards, this can be accomplished through discussion with experienced judges from other jurisdictions, through training, through the provision of technical and material assistance, and through research. The following classification provides some indication of what forms of assistance are in widest use at the present.

Exchange of information and experience. The exchange of information and experience is perhaps the basic form of international cooperation in capacity-building in any field.⁴

⁴ International cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice can be either *operational* or *capacity-building* cooperation. Operational cooperation deals primarily with the investigation, prosecution, adjudication and follow-up of individual cases and suspects/offenders. Capacity-building cooperation is designed to

Crime prevention, criminal law and criminal justice are no exception.

The exchange can take the form of participation in international seminars, congresses and other meetings (either by people from the West going to meetings in Central and Eastern Europe, or by promoting the participation of practitioners and researchers from Central and Eastern Europe in meetings in the West), the exchange of copies of court decisions, legislation, publications, newsletters, and other items of interest, or service as a clearinghouse for information.

For example, the Council of Europe has sought to establish entire basic human rights libraries in the form of core documentation to a number of libraries in Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia. It has also established three "Council of Europe Information and Documentation Units," in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Training. The second most common form of capacity-building cooperation appears to be through the provision of training. The training can be provided in the home country of the participants, or it can take place in connection with study tours or exchanges of staff members. It can be directed either at the end-users (for example, the policemen, prosecutors, judges or prison officers) or it can seek to have a multiplier effect by being directed at trainers (such as teachers at police colleges or at prison staff training facilities).

Training is important as a means of bringing about attitudinal change on the part of criminal justice practitioners. Mere installation of hardware or superficial training in new techniques will not ensure the desired changes in operations. Wherever possible, practitioners from Central and Eastern Europe should be provided direct exposure to Western practice in carefully tailored projects, through study tours or hands-on

improve the general effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system or related systems.

training courses.⁵

Perhaps the most notable training programme is the Themis Plan of the Council of Europe, which consists of six projects designed to assist lawyers and practitioners in implementing legislative reforms. These six projects are (1) Police in a society in transition, (2) The transformation of the "prokuratura" into a body compatible with the democratic principles of law, (3) The role of a judge in a democratic society, (4) A new concept of the prison system, (5) Functioning of a Ministry of Justice in a state governed by the rule of law, and (6) Drafting of laws in a state governed by the rule of law.

Research. In addition to its use in gathering information, research can be seen as a specialized form of the exchange of information and expertise. It can take the form of cooperative research projects where outside entities provide technical, methodological and financial support to studies that will help the development of crime prevention and criminal justice. One example is the work of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute in studying victimization in a number of Central and Eastern European countries. Research can also be carried out entirely by an outside entity, with the results contributing to the storehouse of knowledge.

Technical assistance. Assistance can take the form of expert advice on the reform and development of crime prevention and criminal justice. The United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, for example, send missions to various countries to discuss various approaches with the relevant authorities and suggest ways in which these ap-

⁵ In this paper, the assumption is that most projects will involve one or more Western European donor and one or more Central and Eastern European beneficiary. This need not always be true; for example, international co-operation is developing among the Central and Eastern European countries.

proaches can be implemented. The Council of Europe has provided extensive advice in the reform of legislation. The American Bar Association has initiated a project involving, for example, resident liaison experts and the assessment of proposed legislation.

Material assistance. Several governments, agencies, institutions, organizations and individuals have provided direct assistance to Central and Eastern Europe. The donations have ranged from police cars and prison transport vans to used clothing, various police equipment and personal computers.

Financial assistance. Finally, cooperation can and has taken the form of outright financial grants, which have been put to a variety of purposes: the purchase of necessary equipment, the provision of expertise, the organization of training and meetings, and so on.

3. Preparation of the project proposal

3.1. The need for careful planning

Recommendation: A written project proposal should be prepared, specifying the purpose of the project, its expected impact, how the project fits in with over-all plans for development, the timetable, and the responsibilities of each party.

Many projects are developed on an ad-hoc basis in a burst of enthusiasm, with insufficient thought to the costs involved, or to the intended effects and impact.

A cooperation project can either be part of a sustained effort or it can be a hit-and-run effort. Regrettably often, individual projects are not linked to over-all plans for development, and for this reason cannot have the desired long-term impact. Simply put, the partners to the project do not have an over-all strategy for development.

Errors in planning may also become evident in the details. For example in the case of meeting and seminars, the substance may be

poorly thought out, the written materials may have little information value, the speakers may not be aware of the purposes of the meeting, insufficient attention may be paid to cultural tailoring of the programme or to the need to overcome the language barrier, the participants may be poorly selected and ill-prepared, there may be insufficient time for discussion, and so on.

Ideally, a cooperation project is carefully planned so that the components are tailor-made to the needs and priorities of the recipient country, and there is some form of follow-up to ensure that the project actually has an impact. If it should turn out that the project did not have the desired impact, the follow-up may help to ascertain why not.

3.2 Verification of the utility of the project

Recommendation: The project proposal should identify the anticipated benefits of the project. It should also analyze the risks associated with the project.

Not all needs and priorities in Central and Eastern Europe can be met even in part through international cooperation. Although it is a homily to say that the development of a criminal justice system is closely tied to the specific cultural, economic, legal, political and social conditions of the country in question, people and organizations providing assistance often fail to recognize this. International cooperation with even the best intentions may not be of benefit, or may become dysfunctional.

Many questions of utility are prosaic. Libraries in Central and Eastern Europe may appreciate receiving copies of the leading Western journals, textbooks, studies and reports of new legislation or court cases, but there is little utility in sending out-of-date reports or remaindered books devoted to arcane subjects, especially if they are in a language understood by few in the target country. Second-hand personal computers may find appreciative recipients, but may

become useless if insufficient attention is paid to the mundane questions of compatibility, software or maintenance.

The question of utility is not one for the donor countries alone to consider. The officials seeking assistance may lack a comprehensive view of their country's needs. As a consequence, they may pursue the interests of the government department or agency from which they come, and do not sufficiently coordinate their requests with those of other agencies. It is difficult for a donor country or agency to assess the utility of a project proposed by the beneficiary country itself.

3.3. Identifying the partners in the project

Recommendation: Both potential donors and recipients must take the time to critically assess the capacity of their partner to follow through on the project. In case of doubt, back-up support from other sources may prove necessary.

An appreciable number of cooperative projects develop out of chance. Two people happen to meet, discover mutual areas of interest, and realize that one has something to offer the other. Often these projects succeed, but perhaps just as often, they fail to have the anticipated impact. Some Western partners in international projects have noted cases where the assistance that they proffer has not had the desired impact because of the inability of their contacts to utilize the assistance as intended. This is generally because the contact person in the recipient country is not necessarily the person who is most aware of the true needs, or a person who can make a commitment on the part of the recipient agency / recipient country.

Simple examples are where donations of documentation or personal computers gather dust on the shelves or on the desks of senior officials or professors, who keep them primarily for their status value and not for their substantive value. The assistance does not "trickle down" to those who can use them and who need them. Another example is

where invitations to take part in study tours or invitations to meetings in the West go to those who have the greatest status (or who happen to be the first to hear about the invitation) and not necessarily to those who are in the best position to pass on to others what is learned.

More general and problematic examples arise in situations where a donor must choose between two different target countries which have different infrastructures. Should the donor choose country A, where the standard of criminal justice is already high, and the infrastructure for implementing and utilizing the assistance is in place, or country B, where the absolute need is clearly greater, but it is far more difficult to have the required impact?

On the part of the recipients, in turn, the identification of potential donors may be problematic. The contacts in other countries may not necessarily have the resources, expertise or commitment necessary for following through on the project.⁶

Consequently, attention should be paid to identifying the partners in cooperation projects. In this respect, one factor to consider is the level of the contact in either the donor or the recipient country: should it be with the highest policy-making level, the middle-level management, or the level of the practitioner who does the actual work. Often, the answer would be that all three levels must be involved.

In the recipient country, the policy-making level must understand the need for the change in question, and their political and financial commitment must be ensured. The middle level -- all the way down to, for

⁶ In addition, potential recipient agencies do not necessarily know to whom to turn for substantive or financial assistance. Even the preparation of requests for financing may cause difficulties; while Western criminal justice practitioners have often had long experience with seeking out funding, this is not necessarily true of practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe.

example, the desk sergeant at local police stations, the chief city prosecutor or the governor of a prison -- must be involved because they make the day-to-day decisions on policy. Finally, the actual practitioners must understand the rationale for the reform. They must be made to feel that they are part of the reform, and that it is in their own interest to implement it. Otherwise, any attempts at reform will almost inevitably miscarry.

In the donor country, in turn, the support and understanding of the policy-making level can ensure the political and financial commitment of the donor.⁷ The middle-level and practitioner level, which will often be involved in for example training or exchange of experience, must understand exactly what is required, so that they can orient themselves to the project.

3.4. Ensuring coordination

Recommendation: In preparing the project proposal, an attempt should be made to identify all the "stakeholders" in the project and ensure their support, from the practitioner level up to the policy-making level.

In the recipient country, both vertical and horizontal coordination is often needed in international projects. The purpose of vertical coordination is to ensure the political and financial commitment of the top level, the understanding and support of the middle-management level, and the understanding and commitment of the practitioner level. Horizontal coordination is needed in order to avoid inter-agency competition, the possible attempt of an agency to "take over" a project, which may cut off links with e.g. other Ministries, other agencies or key non-governmental organizations.

⁷ This is, of course, usually not applicable in the case of projects involving organizations or private companies. Nonetheless, "official" back-up support may prove useful in the project.

A number of Central and Eastern European countries have established national councils for crime prevention or other national forums for the discussion of coordination in crime prevention and criminal justice. In some cases, a deliberate effort has been made to involve both intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in this work.

3.5. Estimation of the costs of the project

Recommendation: The project proposal should seek to identify all of the cost factors and should specify who is responsible for these.

Many projects have hidden costs. All of those involved should be aware of what their actual commitment will be. For example, even a visit by an expert requires preparation, staff time and financial outlay; recipient agencies may in time consider these visits more a nuisance than as assistance. In particular translation of the relevant documentation, and the provision of interpretation services are often necessary, but quite expensive elements of international projects. Material assistance must be backed up by technical expertise and training.

4. Implementing the project

4.1. The need for cultural tailoring

Recommendation: The potential donors should take the time to familiarize themselves with the legal system and culture in the recipient country. Ideally, the project teams should have representatives from different countries.

One major source of problems is the misunderstandings that arise when those providing assistance have little knowledge of the situation in the target country, and make paternalistic assumptions about what is needed. Practitioners in Central and Eastern Europe have been heard to complain about foreign "experts" who come in on a whirlwind tour, speak in a condescending manner

about the need to change this or that (usually remaining safely on a very general level), and then disappear, having depleted the host's reserves for hospitality. Generally, such experts seem satisfied with delivering basic lectures on some aspect of their own country's legal system, or on some general criminological or criminal justice topic, with little if any effort to relate the topic to the situation in the target country.

Along the same lines, some participants appear to assume that the best thing Central and Eastern European countries can do is to remodel their system along the lines of the donor's own criminal justice system. Similarly, the assumption may be that a project which has been successfully implemented in one Central and Eastern European country can be equally successful elsewhere; the donors may not realize the considerable differences that exist between the countries in the region.

The difficulty here is that criminal justice is not as such an object for export. Ideas and concepts must always be tailored to the specific conditions in the host country, or run the risk of being rejected out of hand or of becoming dysfunctional in a strange environment.

Cultural tailoring may be easier if the project is carried out by multinational teams representing a diversity of views. Project teams that come from only one culture may raise the risk of a chauvinistic approach to criminal justice; they may tend to see the solution to problems in terms of merely transplanting their own approach to criminal justice to the host country. Monocultural teams may also be more subject to the risk of cultural misunderstandings. Bringing together practitioners from more than one culture can help in identifying and overcoming these dangers.

In any case, the cooperative partner should familiarize itself with the background of the criminal justice system in the host country. This self-evident prerequisite is often over-

looked in the rush to carry out projects.⁸ Familiarization with the background of the criminal justice system -- in the case of Central and Eastern European countries, also with the pre-socialist and socialist period -- would help not only in developing the project and ascertaining its utility, but also in identifying the key partners, the necessary experts and the financing.

4.2. The benefits of starting small

Recommendation: Although major reform requires considerable work, international projects should ideally be of a manageable size, starting small and proceeding in incremental steps. Where possible, larger projects should be developed as a set of independent modules.

Many projects are overly ambitious in scope, and some have a tendency to snowball, with different parties suggesting new elements. Smaller pilot projects, although they may be politically less attractive, provide an opportunity for assessing what forms of cooperation really work (and, correspondingly, what forms do not work). Certainly in the case of projects requiring large investments in time and resources, pilot projects provide an opportunity to learn from experience, and make the necessary changes in the subsequent implementation of the project.

Often, the success of large projects is endangered because key elements are not yet in place, due to (for example) bureaucratic delays, problems with subcontractors or turnover among personnel. For this reason, large projects should ideally be developed as a set of modules (for example, clearly delineated training packages) that can, if necessary, be implemented independently of other elements of the same project.

⁸ Among the reasons for not studying the background are the difficulties in identifying useful sources of information, and the costs of, and the inevitable delays resulting from, translation.

4.3. The importance of financial and political stability

Recommendation: Timetables and cost estimates should be realistic. Projects have a tendency to last longer and cost more than initially expected. This requires attention to the insurance of financial and political stability in the long run.

In order for more complex cooperative projects to succeed, the infrastructure in the host country must be stable. This requires both financial and political stability. Financial stability is necessary to ensure that the project is funded all the way through to the end; otherwise, for example a computerization project will end at the way-side, with expensive computers in place, but no one trained to use them. Political stability is necessary to ensure that the senior policy makers are behind the project from start to finish, and can if necessary overcome resistance on the lower echelons.

The cooperative project should be seen as part of an incremental development of the criminal justice system of the host country. The projects should not be regarded in isolation from other, ongoing or planned projects. Instead, they should be placed within the framework of short, medium and long-term plans for development, with specific objectives identified for each component. This would also help to assure the required long-term commitment as well as long-term financial and political support.

One caution here is that staff turnover in many Central and Eastern European countries has been quite rapid, on all levels. Changes on the practitioner level may mean that investments made in training will be largely wasted, if the trained staff members move on to other jobs. Consideration could be made of the recipient countries requiring, in appropriate cases, that practitioners

participating in international training agree to remain in their post for a specified period.

Furthermore, many timetables are overly optimistic. All bureaucracies - East and West - move slowly. Unexpected snags at any stage may derail the entire project. Political changes in the recipient country may change the operating environment. Large-scale projects may collapse due to lack of long-term funding, either by the donor or by the recipient.

5. Monitoring and evaluation⁹

Recommendations:

- With the possible exception of small-scale and ad hoc projects, all project proposals should include a monitoring and evaluation component.
- The proposals should specify clear timetables and clear lines of authority.
- Base-line measurements should be made that would allow the extent of change to be measured, and to compare the investment in time, money and resources to the results achieved.
- The beneficiary country should promptly provide the donor with all relevant information concerning the subject matter of the assistance project, in order to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.
- Specific targets should be identified, either in respect of the expected effect or of the expected impact.
- The possibility of an "early warning system" could be developed, set off by a failure to achieve specific milestones on schedule, thus alerting the partners in the project to difficulties that may arise in implementation.

Few international projects in crime pre-

⁹ Monitoring is understood as the measurement and assessment of the progress of implementation, and evaluation as the measurement and assessment of the effects and impacts of the project, either during or after the project.

vention and criminal justice include a monitoring or evaluation component. This is apparently because the parties to the projects tend to assume that the plans will be implemented as originally devised, and the goals will be achieved as a matter of course. Regrettably, this is not always the case.

The absence of a clear timetable and clear lines of authority may make it impossible to determine if the success of a project is being endangered, and what should be done to avoid such problems. No base-line measurements are made that would allow the extent of change to be measured, and to compare the investment in time, money and resources to the results achieved. Information relevant to the monitoring and evaluation of the project may perhaps not be shared between donor and recipient. No specific targets are identified, either in respect of the expected effect (e.g., actual changes in law enforcement, actual provision of information to those needing it) or of the expected impact (the long-term sustainable result; e.g., protection of human rights in criminal justice). The reason may be the lack of time (the need to move on as soon as possible to implementation), lack of resources or lack of understanding of the importance of evaluation.

Even in cases where monitoring and evaluation are considered, there may be a number of reasons for deciding not to pay much attention to them. The main reasons appear to be the following:

- The evaluation of the effects and impact of a project is almost always qualitative and subjective; crime prevention and criminal justice projects do not lend themselves to the standard measures of evaluation.
- It is difficult to separate the impact of a project from the impact of other, simultaneous changes in the operating environment (e.g. increases in crime, changes in public attitudes).
- Proper monitoring and evaluation require resources and expertise, which are often in short supply.
- Critical evaluation of a project may be politically sensitive: the stake

holders may easily feel that a negative assessment of the project in question will endanger future funding in their area.

- Most projects are so small that their impact is barely perceptible. Moreover, since evaluation and monitoring has costs of their own, it may well not be cost-effective to require the evaluation and monitoring of small projects.

The difficulties in identifying quantitative indicators of change, or of teasing out the impact of the project itself from the impact of background changes should not in itself be a bar to evaluation. Even subjective assessments (by the participants, by the practitioners affected, or ideally by impartial outside evaluators) may help in identifying problem areas, which can then be dealt with.

The third problem, that of small size, can be remedied by the possibility of "bundling" several projects together for evaluation (either several projects by the same donor, or several projects carried out in the same sector by different donors. Comparisons of the work of governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations may be of interest in this respect).

One further problem met with in evaluation is that some ethnic and professional cultures - in Central and Eastern Europe may be more resistant to open evaluation than their counterparts in the West, who have had longer experience with this. There is thus a need to involve key participants in the projects from the outset as "stakeholders".

6. Some closing reflections: the illusiveness of international coordination

One of the mantras in international co-operation in the reform of crime prevention and criminal justice in Central and Eastern Europe has been "coordination". Everyone appears to agree in theory that coordination would be beneficial, but when theory is

turned into practice, attempts to coordinate international cooperation have often been misunderstood as an attempt to determine what cooperation should be undertaken.

In this context, coordination should be understood simply as an attempt to find out who is doing in what, and informing the relevant parties of this. Knowing that, for example, country A is helping to organize the training of police officers in country B in the investigation of organized crime may be useful to others for a number of reasons:

- agencies or organizations planning the training of police officers elsewhere may be interested in the experiences of country A, and in the success of the course from the perspective of country B;
- agencies or organizations planning other police-related activities in country B may be interested in information that may have emerged regarding the country's police force and in particular regarding suitable contacts;
- police agencies in other potential recipient countries may be interested in the success of the course from the perspective of country B, information that may help them to determine whether similar courses should be organized in their country; and
- researchers interested in organized crime may be interested in knowing if any new data emerged on the phenomenon.

Several organizations are seeking to collect and disseminate this information. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development collected a considerable amount of information on international co-operation projects in a number of fields in Central and Eastern Europe. (Regrettably, OECD decided to close this database as of 31 December 1995, primarily due to the high cost of maintaining the data base.) The United Nations International Drug Control Programme continues to collect a considerable amount of information on projects related to the drug issue, which when widely understood includes the prevention and control of drug-related offences and the development of the capacity of the criminal justice system to deal with drug offences and drug offenders. The European Union is

currently considering the establishment of a database on international projects in crime prevention and criminal justice affecting the Central and Eastern European countries, as is the University of Tilburg of the Netherlands. Finally, the United Nations Development Programme is considering a continuation of the OECD database, on "Democracy, Governance and Participation".

The United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme has also entered the field by establishing a global clearinghouse on international projects on crime prevention and criminal justice (ECOSOC resolution 1995/12, 24 July 1995). Prior to this, HEUNI had already begun to gather such information regarding the Central and Eastern European countries. Accordingly, it was formally requested to develop this as a pilot project, as the forerunner of similar clearinghouses regarding projects in other regions, or of one clearinghouse that would contain information (ideally) on projects carried out all around the world. (See the annex.)

The existence of so many different clearinghouses has led to confusion, and also to frustration among practitioners who are repeatedly asked to provide detailed information on their projects to different international agencies. This frustration is often compounded by the fact that the same practitioners may be asked to provide information to a number of agencies in their own country on their international projects, and by the fact that the requests from international agencies tend to come in foreign languages. The frustration is also understandable because the practitioner may not have time to fill out questionnaires, may not understand the meaning of individual questions in the questionnaire, or may not appreciate how he or she personally could benefit from providing such information.

One proposal for overcoming this overlapping network for coordination is that each country (donor and beneficiary) seek to centralize information on international projects, whether in their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Development,

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, the Office of the Prime Minister, Parliament, or other focal points. (Steps along these lines have already been taken by a few countries, such as Germany and Sweden.) The information could then be shared either directly with other Governments or inter-governmental organizations, or indirectly through the resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme, who would ensure its dissemination internationally. Ideally, the information requested and supplied could follow a simple and standard format.

This ideal model is currently being developed by the United Nations Development Programme in connection with their task force on Democracy, Governance and Participation. Whether the model can be extended to crime prevention and criminal justice, and whether the model will also pick up information on the work of private companies, organizations or individuals remain open questions.

As is the case with individual projects in international cooperation, even projects on the coordination of these projects require careful planning, implementation and evaluation.

Annex

THE HEUNI CLEARINGHOUSE ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The HEUNI Clearinghouse was established by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) to assist member States in coordinating their international assistance to Central and Eastern Europe in crime prevention and criminal justice (ECOSOC resolution 1995/12, 24 July 1995).

The database is designed to assist policy makers in

- the better allocation of resources at a time of economic austerity,
- the identification of gaps in assistance,
- the identification of potential partners in co-operative projects,
- the identification of opportunities for collaborative action, and
- improving support for an incremental approach in development.

The clearinghouse provides information on request on projects, classified by

- **areas of interest**
- **form of assistance**
- **donor countries**
- **beneficiary countries**

Work on the HEUNI clearinghouse has been coordinated with the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation, and the United Nations Development Programme. The clearinghouse format supplements the already existing database of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

One of the primary purposes of this co-ordination is to avoid multiplicity of data collection efforts, and at the same time ensure complementary coverage of the field.

ECOSOC resolution 1995/12 invites all Member States of the United Nations, all international organizations and all other entities engaged in training and technical assistance in Central and Eastern Europe in

the field of crime prevention and criminal justice to provide information for the clearinghouse.

HEUNI invites you to provide information on current and planned international projects in crime prevention and criminal justice benefitting Central and Eastern Europe.

Further information can be obtained from:

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FIN-00131 Helsinki
(tel) +358-9 1825 7880
(fax) +358-9 1825 7890
e-mail: heuni@om.vn.fi

What projects are included?

The clearinghouse contains data on international projects that

- benefit at least one Central and Eastern European country;
- are in progress on or begun after 1 January 1995; and
- deal with crime prevention and criminal justice.

The term "project" is understood widely. Examples are the organization of training courses, the provision of expertise, or the provision of material assistance. The assessment of whether or not activity is defined as a "project" depends on whether or not it assists criminal justice practitioners or policy-makers in their work. The emphasis is on projects that assist in incremental development - projects that other persons or entities working in the same area should know about when planning their own activities.

